



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Following The Tragic Death of Shannon Pepper, Young, Giglio Call For Passage of Brittany's Law

CATHARINE YOUNG February 23, 2015

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*Legislation would require registration for violent felony offenders, create a statewide database*

OLEAN – Following a tragic fire this past weekend in Cuba, New York, that cut short the life of domestic violence survivor Shannon Pepper, Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I-Olean) and Assemblyman Joseph M. Giglio (R,C,I-Gowanda) are calling for the Assembly to pass Brittany's Law.

Brittany's Law, co-sponsored by Senator Young and advocated for by Shannon Pepper since she was violently attacked in 2013, would create a registry, similar to the sex offender registry, for violent felony offenders. The legislation, which has passed the Senate several times previously but has not been brought to a vote in the Assembly, would require a violent felony offender register with the Division of Criminal Justice Services upon discharge and establishes public access to the information. The legislation would also require annual

registration from offenders, allowing local law enforcement agencies and the state to monitor their whereabouts.

In 2013, Shannon Pepper was brutally beaten by her then live-in boyfriend, Anthony Nevone, during a vicious two-day assault that left her comatose for several months. During the attack, she suffered a shattered jaw, bruised eyes, boot-shaped bruises on her back, and broken ribs. Along with the blows to her body, Nevone also bit Ms. Pepper so hard she nearly lost her lips and she suffered severe brain bleeding and damage from repeated blows to the head, inflicted by objects like a DVD player and candlestick holder.

After recovering from her attack and helping the Cattaraugus County District Attorney's Office build a case against Nevone that led to him being sentenced to two decades in prison and five years of post-release supervision, Ms. Pepper became an outspoken advocate for domestic violence victims.

"Shannon Pepper was a courageous survivor who used her personal tragedy to fight for greater protection for others. My heart goes out to her loved ones. When I personally called her step-father, Thomas Randolph, he told me the best way we can honor Shannon's memory is to pass Brittany's Law to save other victims.

"Anthony Nevone had already proven his heinous nature when he attacked another young woman before he nearly took Shannon's life. Victims of domestic violence deserve to know

that their offenders will be not only held accountable but that steps are in place so their attackers cannot hurt someone in the future. We know many violent felony offenders are likely to repeat their crimes and establishing a registry and making their information public would help protect the lives of New Yorkers like Shannon Pepper,” said Senator Young.

Assemblyman Joseph Giglio, a co-sponsor of the Assembly bill to enact Brittany’s Law, said, “We’ve seen one too many tragedies that could’ve been prevented by having access to certain information about violent criminals. We can do more to protect the public, and it is time that the downstate-dominated Assembly leadership brings Brittany’s Law to the floor of the Assembly for a vote. Important legislation like Brittany’s Law should not be blocked from receiving a vote by the rules of the Assembly. My condolences go out to Shannon Pepper’s family. I’ll continue to advocate for the passage of Brittany’s Law in honor of Shannon and all victims of domestic violence.”

Prior to the assault on Ms. Pepper, Nevone had previously been convicted of first-degree assault against a previous girlfriend. At the time of the attack on Ms. Pepper, he was on parole. Had Brittany’s Law been in place at the time, Nevone would have appeared on the registry.

“As I have said before, there is no logical reason why the Assembly has repeatedly blocked this important legislation. Their downstate leadership has created this dynamic where victims continue to arise and it’s a shame. In Shannon’s memory, I urge the Assembly to act immediately to pass this legislation and create this critical safeguard for our communities,”

concluded Senator Young.

Brittany's Law is named in honor of Brittany Passalacqua of Geneva, New York, who was murdered along with her mother, Helen Buchel, in 2009 by John Edward Brown. Brown, a parolee, who had a lengthy history of arrests including assault with a hammer was released from prison after serving only part of his three year sentence for violently assaulting his infant daughter in 2003.